

**For Immediate Release**

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Contact: Mike Brown, Mayor's Office, 614-645-6428  
Mary Carran Webster, Public Service Dept., 614-376-6240  
John Ivanic, City Council, 614-645-6798

## **City's Bicentennial Bikeway Planning Clicking Into High Gear**

(Columbus) Flanked by dozens of bike riders, Mayor Michael B. Coleman and Councilmember Maryellen O'Shaughnessy biked from City Hall to North Bank Park today to announce the launch of the City's Bicentennial Bikeways Plan to add off-street trails and on-street bike lanes, and to make biking safer for residents.

**"This is a great season for biking - for fun, fitness or even to save gas, but we need to make it safer and more convenient for riders and teach drivers to respect bikes," Mayor Coleman said. "Too many people in Columbus have been hurt or killed walking and biking, and the City is refocusing our neighborhood and traffic planning to be bike and pedestrian-friendly."**

The Bicentennial Bikeways Plan is a continuation of Mayor Coleman and Councilmember O'Shaughnessy's long-standing commitment to pedestrian safety. Not only is the City stepping up programs to slow traffic in neighborhoods and build sidewalks, but it also is including bike lanes and sidewalks on major road projects, such as Hard Road and Morse Road.

**"This is an exciting project," said Councilmember O'Shaughnessy, an avid bicyclist. "It's a good time to be a bicyclist in Columbus, and it's going to get even better."**

Columbus maintains 87 miles of bike trails, bike lanes and posted bike routes, and plans to add some 60 miles of trails in the next four years. The Mayor and Councilmember O'Shaughnessy are investing \$255,000 to hire a nationally known consultant to plan for more – and safer – commuter and recreational bicycling.

**"Our bikeways and green paths are what connect us – they tie and bind the region together. The Columbus Bicentennial Bikeway Plan is also good for our air quality, helps relieve congestion and enhances our quality of life," said Chester R. Jourdan, Jr., Executive Director of the Mid Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC).**

Work on the plan started this week, as the City of Columbus, MORPC, Burgess & Niple, and Alta Planning + Design began conducting an inventory of existing bike trails, lanes and posted routes, as well as an assessment of support facilities like bike racks, drinking fountains and benches. The next step is to study vehicle traffic, lane width and crossing protection on bike lanes to make them safer.

**“The Transportation and Pedestrian Commission is excited that the city has engaged the help of ALTA, the nation’s best bicycle planning organization, and we look forward to working with the City to implement the recommendations and adding a critical asset to the viability of Columbus,” said Michael Wilkos, a local planning expert and Commission member.**

**The Bicentennial Bikeways Plan will include:**

- New trails, lanes and posted routes for both recreational and commuter bicyclists;
- Improved street-crossing protection, with signals and signage;
- Bike racks, lockers and shower facilities;
- A public awareness campaign for bicyclists and motorists;
- A long-term plan for improvements, starting with the capital investment in the Bicentennial Bond Package, which will go to the voters next year.

Much of the legwork and many suggestions are coming from residents and bicycle advocates, who are members of a stakeholders’ group that met today to map out the next phases of the Bicentennial Bikeways Plan.

Photos of today's ride and a digital map of existing trails and routes are available upon request.